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THE MIDLANDS MESSENGER

Emmaus of The Midlands

June 2005

When God Throws a Party

By: Rev. Michael Bingham

Ever lost your car keys? Ever lost a tool or utensil you needed to use? Ever lost your sunglasses? I don't know about you, but I've torn my home apart looking for something I wanted to find and couldn't. I've broken a sweat, moved furniture, and gotten downright ornery looking for something of mine that I wanted but could not find. Recently I misplaced my sunglasses, and it bothers me more than I like to admit.

But Jesus doesn't talk to us about lost car keys. Jesus doesn't talk to us about lost tools or utensils. Jesus doesn't talk to us about lost sunglasses. In fact, Jesus doesn't really talk to us about lost people. However, Jesus talks to us an awful lot about lost **souls**.

God once asked me an awful, terrible question. To be completely honest with you, I was so ashamed of my answer I almost disobeyed God's will and didn't share this story with anyone else. God asked me—right there in my study—God touched my heart with this question, "Michael, when is the last time you really looked for my lost children?"

I'm perfectly willing to spend an incredible amount of time and energy looking for things that don't really matter at all. And all the while, I am surrounded by lost sons and daughters of God who are dying to come home. Spend time on something that matters. Help a lost sinner come home to Jesus. When you do, God throws a party (see Luke 15). DeColores



Prayers

Charlie and Carolyn McLean, Mrs. Riles (Debbie Nix's Mother), Keith Cunnup, Paul Robinson, Richard Adams (Laxton Hinson's brother-in-law), Vera and Cynthia (Doris Crocker's sisters), Jerius Stork, Missy & Kris Kneece, Vance & Janice Jeffcoat, Whitt family, Bill Whitt's mother, Sherri Sturkey, Myrtle Davis, Arthur Elkins, Dixie, Mill Creek and Suber Marshall Churches were vandalized, Kay Scott, Phyllis Plemmons, Furman Davison, Pat Amick, Elizabeth Amick, Stern Bolte, Gary and Beverly Heinly, Anita Dickinson, Susan Spears, John Johnson, Boys' Epiphany, Jeremiah Amick, Bill Auld, Diane McCrary, Billy Monroe, Linda Marrs, Jim Silby, Roger McLemore, Graduates, Civilians in Afghanistan, Beth and Russ Hill and 3 year old son, Annual Conference, pastors changing churches, churches changing pastors, Tsunami victims, VBS in churches, communities with military bases closing

Praises

The Plemmons have joined McCloud Church after their Walk to Emmaus.

Visit our web site at
www.midlandsemmaus.com



Emmaus Education Corner

Team Selection.

by: Doris Crocker

Going on an Emmaus Walk is an exciting and rewarding experience as all of you know, but ---- working on an Emmaus Walk is even more exciting and rewarding. So, how do you get to be a member of an Emmaus team? The following extracts from the Emmaus Handbook, published by the headquarters in Nashville will bring some clarity, and if you have any questions, contact me at doriscrocker@bellsouth.net

The Emmaus Board selects the Lay Director and the Spiritual Director for each Walk. The rest of the team is selected by the team selection committee. The committee consists of an Emmaus board member who serves as chair of the committee, the Community Spiritual Director, and three or four other members of the Emmaus community (non-board members) who have a broad awareness of the Emmaus community membership and a solid understanding of team needs.

Names of potential team members are taken from community membership records indicating persons' support of Emmaus: prayer vigil charts, kitchen charts, snack agape charts, set-up and clean-up charts, and especially participant rosters for Emmaus training programs. Names of potential team members also may be submitted to the Team Selection committee throughout the year.

The purpose of an established progression of responsibilities for Emmaus Community members is twofold: leadership training and spiritual development. A person's readiness to carry out his or her assignment effectively depends on and is always enhanced by prior experience in another position. The progression of responsibilities starts with support roles (agape, kitchen, set-up) and then moves to the conference room. Entry positions for the Conference Room Team are either Assistant Table Leader (who gives a talk) or Table Leader. Experience in both positions and two talks is necessary before progressing to Assistant Lay Director. The position of Lay Director is for those who have served at

least twice as Assistant Lay Director and have given three talks. The role of Music Leader requires sufficient team experience to know the place of music in the weekend and to have served as an Assistant Music leader on a previous team. Having served in one position does not assure that the person will move to the next step in the progression.

Emmaus leadership begins and ends with anonymous positions of servanthood, such as working in the kitchen, praying in the chapel, sorting letters in the agape room, and cleaning bathrooms. This kind of sacrifice and servanthood is the heart of Emmaus and is where development of Christian leadership begins.

The "One-third Rule" means the Team Selection Committee will strive to staff each team with approximately one-third new conference team members, one-third second or third-time members, and one-third team veterans. This guideline helps avoid using the same people on team after team and expands the base of leadership in the community. Each Walk becomes an opportunity to incorporate new persons into teams and gradually to move those with some experience into other leadership positions.

An Afternoon in the Park

By: Unknown Author

There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with Twinkies and a six-pack of root beer and he started his journey.

When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old woman. She was sitting in the park just staring at some pigeons. The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed that the old lady looked hungry, so he offered her a Twinkie. She gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. Her smile was so pretty that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered her a root beer. Once again she smiled at him. The boy was delighted!

They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word.

As it grew dark, the boy realized how tired he was and he got up to

leave, but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old woman and gave her a hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever.

When the boy opened the door to his own house a short time later, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face.

She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?"

He replied, "I had lunch with God." But before his mother could respond, he added, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!"

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home.

Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face and he asked, "Mother, what did you do today that made you so happy?"

She replied, "I ate Twinkies in the park with God." But before her son responded, she added, "You know, he's much younger than I expected."

Home Late

By: Unknown Author

A young girl was very late in coming home from school. Her mother watched the clock nervously and with growing concern. Finally she arrived. Her mother, nearly frantic at that point, hugged her daughter, and after giving her a thorough appraisal and realizing nothing appeared to be wrong, demanded, "Where were you? What took you so long? Haven't I told you to be home by 4 o'clock?"

The girl answered her mother's first question, "I was at Mary's house." "And what was so important that you couldn't get home on time?" her mother scolded. Her daughter replied, "Her favorite doll got broken."

"Did you break it?" the mother asked. When her daughter shook her head "no," she then asked, "Could the doll be fixed?" Again, the girl replied with a "no." Both bewildered and frustrated, the mother asked a third time, "So what was the point of staying so long?"

Tears began to well up in the little girl's eyes and stream down her face under her mother's inquisition. "I helped her cry," she said softly.

Gathering at Mill Creek UMC

By: Tom Furse



Mill Creek UMC—Hopkins

Sandee Green, Harmony Church, Sumter

Joan Gathers, our Community Vice Chairperson opened the meeting with prayer and then presided over it.

After a welcome, several songs, and announcements, Joan turned the podium over to Sandee Green to give the Fourth Day Talk.

Sandee explained to us how being a defiant child and the daughter of an alcoholic father caused her to grow up feeling unloved and starved for male attention. This led to her accepting a proposal of marriage when she was 18 years old.

When she had her daughter, Stefini, she decided that it was important that Stefini attend church. At a little church close to the house she really learned the true meaning of being a Christian and has been grateful that she was able to accept the love of God for her without pursuing a life of works righteousness.

About one year after accepting Christ, she found herself going through a divorce and feeling even more unloved and undesirable than she had at 18 years of age. By immersing herself in prayer she was able to experience God's abundant faithfulness and knew the truth expressed in the poem "Footprints".

Several years later her marriage to her husband Billy helped her know the love of God more fully, so that when friends suggested Billy and Sandee go on the Walk to Emmaus, Sandee thought she did not need it, but Billy did. He went on Walk # 19 and she went on walk #20, five months later. There, Sandee experienced God's extravagant love as her spirit was filled, her tear ducts dehydrated and her belly filled with chocolate. She realized that there is always more of God to know. Since going on Walk #20 Sandee has been

motivated to share God's love and has been more actively involved in her church. She has worked in the kitchen and on the prayer vigil for the Emmaus Walks as well as serving on several teams. She loves seeing God do great things in people's lives and recognizes the value of prayer bathing each walk.

Stefini is grown but Billy and Sandee often pray for wisdom and help in raising their two sons, Joseph and Travis.

Sandee shared that God continues to teach her more and more truth but she struggles with getting her tongue under control. A recent Beth Moore study, "Believing God", assured Sandee of God's love for her despite the imperfections she sees in herself. She keeps on, counting on the message in Phil. 1:6: "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it onto completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Doris Crocker gave the clergy response. Doris said that many present could relate to the story of her upbringing and her search for love. God created in us a desire for love so we would seek him who is love, and he promises that if we seek him we will find him.

She reminded us that coming to believe in Jesus is no guarantee of an easy life, but in difficulties we can grow in our understanding of ourselves and our God. Romans 5:3-5 reminds us that God has a purpose for us. Hard times can define and refine us like nothing else can. They help us get to know God better, but we have to be willing to study and move on to deeper things of God and not get stuck in one place, but go on to maturity. (Heb 6:1) This is what we are reminded to do when we come on our Walk. We are to grow in study and this needs to happen everyday.

Sandee's comments that she felt that it was important for her daughter Stefini to go to church and for her husband Billy to go on Walk #19 but she didn't really need it, reminded Doris of a lot of people in church. They want to apply the sermon to someone else. But God lets them hear it, and he means for them to apply it. The problem of sin comes from our heart which is the wellspring of life. (Prov. 4:23)

Jesus knows our hearts. He knew what was in the heart of Judas at the last supper, but Judas was offered bread and wine. Jesus offers his presence, his peace and his power to all who will hold out their hands and take it.

Chrysalis and the Midlands Emmaus

By: Doris Crocker

Chrysalis is for young people in grades 10-12 and begins as a three day experience of God's love, similar to a Walk to Emmaus. Like Emmaus, it also involves fourth day experiences through Next Step groups and regular gatherings of the larger Chrysalis community called Hoots, as well as providing significant opportunities for Christian service.

The members of the Emmaus Board feel that the time is right for us to offer Chrysalis flights to our young people.

In order to develop a Chrysalis community in the Midlands we need people who are interested in the spiritual maturing of young people to offer their services. We will be linking with the Upper Room in Nashville for guidance, support and training and will be in the process of attending other communities and learning about Chrysalis for the next year.

To begin the process, I need to hear from everyone who is interested in being a part of this venture. It will take a lot of people to pull this together. If you have an interest in joining me in this, please send me the following information:

Name, address, phone number, Walk or flight number.

If you have experience of Chrysalis please tell:

The community name, talks given, service provided (table leader, assistant table leader, lay director, spiritual director, board member, etc.) or any other information that might be helpful.

If you know a young person who has been on a Chrysalis flight, please send me their information, as they may be interested in helping us.

It may be you have never heard of Chrysalis. That's OK. If the Lord is speaking to you to get involved, let me hear from you. If you have already spoken to me about being involved, let me hear from you now as I try to draw this list together so that I will have something to work with when the Upper room agrees to this project.

My address, telephone number and e-mail address are on the first page of the newsletter.

Thanks for your help! This cannot happen without you. And, please, if you do not feel led to offer your body, pray for us. If you do, you will be helping more than you will ever know.

Emmaus of the Midlands
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If you received this newsletter and have an e-mail address, please consider using the Emmaus Web Site to read the monthly newsletter and help reduce the cost of printing and mailing. If you are willing to help in this way, e-mail me at: furset@bellsouth.net.

Future Events

July 22, 2005	Gathering—TBA
August 18-19, 2005	Walk 27 Team Training
August 26, 2005	Gathering—TBA
September 22-25, 2005	Men's Walk # 27
September 24, 2005	Men's Walk # 27 Candlelight
October 6-9, 2005	Women's Walk # 27
October 8, 2005	Women's Walk # 27 Candlelight
October 28, 2005	Gathering—TBA
November	Gathering—TBA
December	Xmas Party—TBA
January 27, 2006	Gathering—TBA
February 23-26, 2006	Men's Walk # 28
February 25, 2006	Men's Walk # 28 Candlelight
March 9-12, 2006	Women's Walk # 28
March 11, 2006	Women's Walk # 28 Candlelight

Next Gathering
June 24, 2005 6:45 pm
at

Salem United Methodist Church

Bowen Street, Elgin, SC
Phone (803) 438-1708

Directions from Sumter: Take US 521 towards Camden. Exit onto I-20 west bound (exit 98). At I-20 exit 87 take White Pond Road towards Elgin. Travel 3.2 miles to US 1 (Two Notch Road). Turn left onto US 1. Take a left at the Salem UMC sign (about 500 yards). Church is on your right in the next block. The church is actually located on Bowen Street, but there is no street sign.

Directions from Columbia/Aiken: Take I-20 to exit 87 (White Pond Road) towards Elgin. Travel 3.2 miles to US 1 (Two Notch Road). Turn left onto US 1. Take a left at the Salem UMC sign (about 500 yards). Church is on your right in the next block. The church is actually located on Bowen Street, but there is no street sign.